

WIFI IN ACTION!

A CULTURAL
INVENTORY TOOLKIT





What if you looked at your community with fresh eyes and discovered existing resources for improvement right in front of you? This toolkit will show you how. By conducting a basic cultural inventory, you may be able to find viable, local solutions to support job growth, increase educational achievement, improve retention of educated residents, boost productive activity, and offer alternatives to substance abuse and crime. The answer is in the **existing arts and culture of your community.**

The arts and culture are fundamental parts of our daily lives. Not only are the arts integral to our leisure activities, the arts are also essential elements in education, at home, at work and in church. Many studies prove that the arts can promote educational success, community pride, heritage preservation, cultural tourism, crime reduction and more. It is time to consider how the arts are already integrated into our daily lives, and how we can capitalize on the arts to ensure the health and vitality of our communities through specific, deliberate initiatives.

The mission of the Tennessee Arts Commission directs us to support the arts in all its forms throughout the state of Tennessee. One way we can do that is to help our constituents identify arts activities which are fundamental to their community, and to make connections between the arts and the economic and community development work already being done at the local level.

This toolkit will explore the basic concept of collecting information about a community that will help build partnerships, grow cultural infrastructure, galvanize community identity, and promote local culture and heritage. **Simply put, this toolkit will help community leaders understand that the arts and culture already exist in their communities and that these resources can be used creatively to address existing challenges.**

By conducting a simple cultural inventory, community leaders will be able to use the collected information to enhance a number of initiatives in which the arts may not have been considered. This toolkit will help communities find existing solutions to local problems by helping connect the dots between issues that seem to be unconnected. **It will help to put art in action.**

ART
COULD SAVE
YOUR COMMUNITY

WE'LL SHOW YOU HOW...

“WHAT’S IN IT FOR ME?”

A **cultural inventory** is a survey focused on the cultural assets of a defined area, such as a town or city, a county or a district. Conducting a cultural inventory can be a massive undertaking involving fieldworkers and consultants, or it can be accomplished with a small committee and a handful of volunteers. The results can be published in print and/or on the Internet (with appropriate permissions from the people included in the directory), and it can be used by local arts agencies, economic development and planning officials for a variety of tasks. Some of the information can be used externally, and it can be used internally to assess the needs of local cultural resources.

What if your local government, Chamber of Commerce, planning agencies, and media had a **comprehensive listing** of all cultural entities in your community? A cultural inventory will identify new or undisclosed cultural activities in a community, and it will create a comprehensive resource for a variety of economic development, recruitment, promotional and educational needs.

A cultural inventory will tell you **WHO** is doing **WHAT**, **WHEN** and **WHERE**. New and relocating businesses, retirees, industries, services and tourists need to know **WHY** your community is the place to be, and a cultural inventory will help you make the case. The inventory can be used to recruit, promote, expand and celebrate community culture. Focusing on the existing assets of the community, learning who does what, when and where, will allow the community’s leaders, promoters and supporters to capitalize on the unique substance of the community and strengthen efforts toward partnerships, promotion and preservation.

A cultural inventory may unearth unexpected treasures on Main Street and on country roads. Chairmakers, weavers, poets, storytellers, fiddlers, pickers, dancers, woodworkers, metalsmiths, local legends, potters, sorghum producers, unique shopkeepers and restaurateurs, call-carvers, corn maze designers, cheese makers, painters, puppeteers and actors reside all over Tennessee. By asking artists to identify themselves (and probing for those who may not do so) and cataloging the culturally-significant sites and events in your community, you will find more variety and excitement than you expect.



"THE ARTS CAN DO SO MUCH. THEY ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF LIFE, OF COURSE. BUT EVEN MORE IMPORTANT, THEY CAN BE A POWERFUL TOOL FOR SOCIAL CHANGE. IN FACT, THE ARTS CAN AND MUST PLAY A LEADERSHIP ROLE IN BRINGING COMMUNITIES TOGETHER..."

**A.G. LAFLEY, CHAIRMAN & CEO, PROCTOR & GAMBLE
OCTOBER 13, 2004**

Examples of arts and culture in your community:

Verbal Arts - speaking to entertain and persuade

Written Literature - writing artistically

Visual Arts - two-dimensional art

Sculpture - three-dimensional art

Music - instrumental and vocal

Dance - artistic expression through body movement

Games & Sports - hunting, marbles, horse training, etc.

Occupational Arts - arts on the job

Household Arts - aesthetic expressions in the home

Foodways & Medicinals - whiskey making, bee keeping, meat curing, etc.

Celebrations - area events which include arts/cultural activities

Venues - for-profit and nonprofit shopping and attractions

[Courtesy Tennessee Overhill Heritage Association]

IT'S A SURVEY!

IT'S A PLAN!

“ ... AND WHY SHOULD I DO IT? ”

Basic cultural inventories are useful because they allow the residents to become involved in defining the cultural identity of their community. When they are counted in a survey, participate in a public meeting or serve on a steering committee for an organized cultural effort, community members feel ownership in their collective cultural identity. They support the people and entities that ensure the continuation of that identity. They participate in cultural planning and preservation, and they promote their community to others.

This ownership, this authenticity of place and culture, leads to a unique community that can be fully and easily promoted in tourism and recruitment efforts. The community knows who they are. They can proclaim: “We stand for these values. We preserve this heritage. We promote these activities. We support these people, these policies and these initiatives.” Even though there is always diversity and variety within a community, this cohesion of voice is what makes a community healthy and vibrant.

Not even the oldest resident of a town knows each and every person who lives there. People come and go, and they take with them their passions, interests, skills and voice. Some young people make music in their basements, some retirees paint diligently in their dining rooms, some middle-aged artisans create yard-art in their garages.

When a community reaches out and asks every resident to identify their skills and interests, the people become engaged in the community and all that it could offer. They begin to volunteer to share their time and skills to teach and inspire others. The professional and amateur artists find ways to exhibit, perform, sell, and promote their work, while the non-artists find new ways to participate and support. Groups find common ground, share resources and create partnerships. Individuals begin to process ideas toward a greater community good, and magic happens in board rooms, school rooms and community rooms.

A broad perspective of culture and cultural activities should be embraced when starting a cultural inventory project. Some people should be counted as cultural resources who may not seem to fit a classic definition of artist. Some loosely-formed groups of like-minded people may wish to be considered an “arts organization” for the inventory. Local “characters” may challenge some ideals and preconceived notions of the arts. Be as inclusive as possible. “The more the merrier” is true in this situation.

“IN TIMES OF WAR AND SACRIFICE, THE ARTS ... REMIND US TO SING AND TO LAUGH AND TO LIVE. IN TIMES OF PLENTY, THEY CHALLENGE OUR CONSCIENCE AND IMPLORE US TO REMEMBER THE LEAST AMONG US. IN MOMENTS OF DIVISION OR DOUBT, THEY COMPEL US TO SEE THE COMMON VALUES THAT WE SHARE; THE IDEALS TO WHICH WE ASPIRE, EVEN IF WE SOMETIMES FALL SHORT. IN DAYS OF HARDSHIP, THEY RENEW OUR HOPE THAT BRIGHTER DAYS ARE STILL AHEAD. SO LET’S NEVER FORGET THAT ART STRENGTHENS AMERICA.”

***PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA
DECEMBER 6, 2009***



PUTTING ART INTO ACTION

A simple, basic assessment of the cultural activities, arts organizations and individual artists can be used by the entire community for many purposes. The raw data (the listing of artists, arts organizations and cultural activities), and the awareness and activities resulting from promotion of entities listed, may benefit the community in:

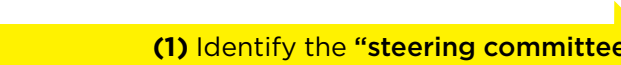
- recruiting residents, businesses and industries
- enhancing educational and entertainment experiences
- preserving and documenting local heritage
- providing critical support to artists and cultural entities
- improving academic performance and graduation rates
- increasing community service activity
- developing and promoting tourism initiatives
- reducing crime
- coordinating efforts among different entities who produce cultural events
- solving community problems
- retaining skilled workforce
- expanding funding and partnership opportunities
- community strategic planning
- improving of quality of life (entertainment options, leisure activities)



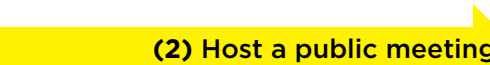
HOW TO CONDUCT A *CULTURAL INVENTORY*

(THE BASIC STEPS)


The focus of this toolkit is to help make cultural inventories a feasible project for any community. Although professional paid consultants could provide many levels of expertise, it is possible to conduct a basic cultural inventory with a minimal budget and volunteers. An initial public meeting will help identify many of the people who are interested in participating. A volunteer committee can organize the project, planning how to collect the information (usually through fieldwork or mailed or online surveys), and what to do with the data once it has been collected. The essential steps start with inviting the entire community to participate, usually through a public meeting, collecting responses to a specific survey through fieldwork or other means, and organizing the information into a useable format (a spreadsheet, Web site or published document).



(1) Identify the “steering committee.” They will plan the initial steps of the project, and perhaps serve on the committee that executes the project. This committee should create an initial questionnaire to be used at the public meeting to collect contact information and other pertinent details about the attendees.



(2) Host a public meeting in the early evening hours in an accessible public building. Make it as easy as possible for community members to attend. Let them know that this meeting is meant to collect their thoughts about the cultural identity of the area. Old-timers and new residents alike should feel welcome to participate and bring their memories, ideas, wishes and passions to the table.



(3) Promote the meeting in newspapers, utility bills, school newspapers, church bulletins, signs and marquees, Web sites, social media, local TV, etc. It is essential that the entire community be invited to participate, even if they don’t initially engage. A small group working independently “behind closed doors” will not garner the comprehensive and inclusive results necessary for a successful inventory project.



(4) Ask open-ended questions about the community's culture and heritage (see Questions for Discussion listed on page 10). Have someone stand at the front of the room with a large easel pad and take notes. Facilitate the conversation so no debate develops. This is a time for people to share their thoughts and wishes, not to critique and interrupt each other. It's a brainstorming session about the cultural assets of the community.

(5) Set a time limit, no more than two hours. At the end of the time, stop the meeting on a pleasant note and ask people to fill out a survey or questionnaire (customized from examples on page 11) that will collect their remaining thoughts and their contact information. Make sure you ask them on the questionnaire if they will attend another meeting or serve on a committee or act as a volunteer fieldworker. Also ask them to promote the survey to their own community networks.

(6) Organize the "project committee" and project volunteers. Remember to invite:

- Local arts agencies, alliances, guilds and organizations
- Chambers of commerce, tourism and/or recruitment officials
- Elected officials
- Community activists
- Major donors, patrons and supporters of culture
- Local artists
- City and county executives
- General community members

(7) Plan the collection phase of the inventory. Create a budget, identify funding, create a survey, develop a distribution plan, decide on a data collection method, and evaluate permission needs. At this point, the steering committee may decide to hire a professional cultural inventory specialist to advise them or manage the entire project. Resources for planning and executing a cultural inventory project are listed on page 12. A list of professional cultural inventory consultants is located on page 15.

(8) Develop the comprehensive survey as an instrument to collect information following the meeting. The survey should ask about a variety of cultural issues, such as heritage sites, local legends, natural sites and assets, celebrations, community events, unique shops, crafters and artisans, teachers, etc. Survey questions should be customized for your region. See page 11 for sample questions. Distribute printed surveys through newspapers, utility bills, school newspapers, church bulletins, etc. Online survey tools (such as SurveyMonkey.com, SurveyGizmo.com and Zoomerang.com) can be used to collect information and can be promoted in traditional ways and through social media such as Facebook.

(9) If you plan to publish a printed or web-based directory of artists and cultural entities, an attorney should be asked to create a permission form that will allow public dissemination of the information. However, people should be given the opportunity to respond with the option of keeping their information private. That way, the committee is able to collect an accurate list of artists and other cultural entities in the area without making distribution of that information a prerequisite for responding.

(10) Disseminate the final product among community leaders and economic development officials, or publish brochures, books or online Web sites. The information contained in a comprehensive cultural inventory can be used in countless ways, as highlighted in the preceding sections of this toolkit.



Questions for Discussion

Why do we live in this community?
What keywords describe our community?
What makes someone want to live here?
What makes someone move away from here?
What languages are spoken here?
Do we have new residents in the area? Why did they move here?
Do we have seasonal residents who live here part-time? Why?
What special people, places or activities make our community unique?
What are we most proud of?
What are we least proud of?
What common bonds do many of our residents share?
What are our differences?
What characteristics make some of our residents unique?
Where does our community gather to celebrate, debate, worship, eat and visit?
What kinds of religious organizations are in our area?
Do any religious organizations provide creative opportunities for their members?
Does our community have a local arts agency or council?
Is that arts agency active and productive? Why or why not?
What creative activities already exist in our community?
What creative activities would we like to see take place here?
How do people find out what is going on in our area?
Who are the people most likely to lead creative activities here?
What kind of businesses do we want to recruit to our area?
What do we think potential businesses want to know about our area?
Do we have any national branded businesses in our community? If not, why?
Do tourists visit our area? Why or why not?
Do we offer creative or cultural activities for tourists? Why or why not?
What do tourists need to know about our area?
Who are the creative people in our community?
What arts related groups already exist in our community?
Do young people receive arts education in our schools?
What do young people in our community do with their free time?
What do young people need from the community to make their college prospects better?
How can we encourage young people to come back after college?
How can we incorporate arts activities into sports events?
Does our area have community centers that provide leisure activities for all ages?
What do retired people in our community do with their free time?
Is there available funding for arts activities in our area?
What other ways can we support arts activities without raising cash funds?
Does our local government support arts activities with funding?



Sample Questions for Surveys

Surveys can be as extensive or as brief as your resources allow. If you plan to use a variety of collection tools (printed surveys, online survey programs, and face-to-face interviews), you may decide to create several different types of survey forms. Customize your survey(s) to reflect your community's specific characteristics and needs.

Questions for Everyone:

Contact info (Name, Address, Phone(s), Email Address, Web site, etc.)

How long have you lived in this community?

What do you do for a living?

Do you consider yourself an artist? (If so, please answer "Questions for Artists.")

Why do you live in this community?

What keywords describe our community?

What people, places and activities make our community unique?

What are we most proud of? What are we least proud of?

Where does our community gather to celebrate, debate, worship, eat and visit?

What creative activities already exist in our community?

What creative activities would we like to see take place here?

How do people find out what is going on in our area?

Who are the people most likely to lead creative activities here?

What do tourists need to know about our area?

Who are the creative people in our community?

Do young people receive arts education in our schools?

What do young people in our community do with their free time?

What do retired people in our community do with their free time?

Would you volunteer your time to help plan cultural activities in our community?

Questions for Artists:

What is your art field?

Are you professional or amateur artist?

Do you work alone or with other artists? Please explain.

Would you offer lessons or mentorship to local adults? To youth?

Do you offer tours of your studio or facility?

Do you create commissioned or custom art work?

Are you available for performances or demonstrations?

Are you available and qualified to teach workshops or classes?

Provide a brief description of yourself and your art activities. Be specific.

Do you agree to be listed in a public cultural directory? If different from the above, please provide contact information that can be made public in print and/or on the Internet.

RESOURCES

The Tennessee Arts Commission presents the following list of resources as a starting point for learning more about cultural inventories, cultural assessments and community planning and development. The listings below are significant resources in this sector, but there are many more resources, consultants, books, Web sites and examples available. The online version of this list, located on the Commission's Web site, www.arts.state.tn.gov, will be updated regularly.

THE ROBERT E. GARD WISCONSIN IDEA FOUNDATION

The Robert E. Gard Foundation is committed to helping people and their communities discover the vital role the arts play in their day-to-day lives. Unlike most foundations, the Gard Foundation does not grant funds, but the resources made available through the Foundation's Web site are essential to the healthy growth of arts infrastructure in small towns.
www.gardfoundation.org

-The Arts in the Small Community (Windmill Project)
www.gardfoundation.org/arts.html

AMERICANS FOR THE ARTS

Americans for the Arts is the nation's leading nonprofit organization for advancing the arts in America. It is dedicated to representing and serving local communities and creating opportunities for every American to participate in and appreciate all forms of the arts. The Web site contains extensive research materials for public use. The bookstore and members-only areas offer additional resources, information and services.
www.americansforthearts.org

A select few examples of the resources available from Americans for the Arts:

-Economic Recovery: Arts Funding Response and Readiness Kit
www.americansforthearts.org/information_services/toolkit/003.asp#society

-Cultural Tourism White Paper: Bridging America Through Partnerships in Arts, Tourism and Economic Development
www.americansforthearts.org/NAPD/files/7995/Bridging%20America%20Through%20Partnerships%20in%20Arts.pdf

- Americans for the Arts Institute for Community Development and the Arts
www.americansforthearts.org/information_services/research/institute_community_development/default.asp

-Animating Democracy: Fostering Civic Engagement through Arts & Culture
www.artsusa.org/animatingdemocracy

THE ARTS EXTENSION SERVICE UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS

The Arts Extension Service is a national arts service organization located at UMass Amherst with a mission to "develop the arts in communities and community through the arts with professional education for arts managers, artists and civic leaders."
www.umass.edu/aes

THE RURAL ARTS & CULTURE PROGRAM (MICHIGAN)

This Web site features a showcase of unique rural community arts projects and a list of useful resources for rural community arts development, including a downloadable workbook for community asset planning, "Your Community Culture: an informal guide to discovery." The Rural Arts & Culture Program is a partnership program between the Michigan State University Museum and the Michigan Council for Arts & Culture Affairs.
ruralarts.museum.msu.edu

TEXAS COMMISSION ON THE ARTS TOOLS FOR RESULTS TOOL-KIT

The TCA Tools for Results Tool-kit was developed as a resource for nonprofit arts and cultural organizations in Texas and beyond. A collaborative project made possible with the help of the Meadows Foundation and Ballet Austin, and a host of other organizations that generously agreed to share their resources. TCA uses in-text citations throughout the Tool-kit in acknowledging sources. The Tool-kit covers six topic areas: Fundraising & Development, Programs & Exhibitions, Cultural Tourism, Marketing, Advocacy, and Nonprofit Basics.
www.arts.state.tx.us/toolkit

RECOMMENDED READING

The Arts in the Small Community 2006 by Maryo Gard Ewell and Michael F. Warlum (downloadable)
gardfoundation.org/windmillprojects.html

Handbook for Tennessee Folk Artists
arts.state.tn.us/folklife.htm

Community Cultural Planning Handbook: A guide for community leaders by Craig Dreeszen
www.artsextensionservice.org/index.php/publications/publications/sample-pages

Fundamentals of Arts Management edited by Pam Korza, Maren Brown & Craig Dreeszen
umasextensionbookstore.com/catalog/product_info.php?products_id=637

The Creative Community Builder's Handbook: How to Transform Communities Using Local Assets, Arts, and Culture by Tom C. Borup
ww2.americansforthearts.org/vango/core/orders/product.aspx?catid=5&prodid=614

Cultural Planning Guidelines for Local Governments (downloadable)
www.dlg.nsw.gov.au/Files/Information/CPG-final.pdf

EXAMPLE CULTURAL ASSESSMENTS & PLANS

A sampling of projects published to the internet:

Creative Edmonton (Canada)
www.creativeedmonton.ca

Indiana Arts Commission & Indiana University School of Public and Environmental Affairs
newsinfo.iu.edu/news/page/normal/14732.html and www.in.gov/arts

Lincoln County Cultural Plan (Oregon)
www.lincolncountyculturalcoalition.org/about/plan

Lower Naugatuck Valley Arts and Cultural Assessment (Connecticut)
electronicvalley.org/arts_Report.htm

Northwest Connecticut Arts Council Cultural Assessment Report
www.artsnwct.org/rca.php

Tennessee Overhill Heritage Association
www.tennesseeoverhill.com

Twin Cities Cultural Inventory (Maine)
www.twincitiescreative.org/theplan.shtml

Visalia Arts Consortium Tulare County Cultural Assessment (California)
www.ci.visalia.ca.us/depts/visalia_arts_consortium/default.asp

FUNDING A CULTURAL INVENTORY PROJECT

Depending on the scope of your project, funding may be a local effort or a more extensive undertaking. Financial support in the form of cash or in-kind contributions might be secured through a combination of private donations, government allocations, volunteer time, in-kind contributions, partnership with a college or university, and foundation or public grants. Grant programs vary greatly and change from year to year, so the following list is a starting point for researching grant opportunities. Government grant programs come and go with budgetary and political tides, so your team may need to do extensive research to secure one or more grants. Seek assistance by contacting the staff of funding agencies early in your planning.

TENNESSEE ARTS COMMISSION

Your community's arts and planning projects may be eligible for funding through a Tennessee Arts Commission grant. The Commission offers a variety of grant categories, so we recommend that you contact the Commission staff for clarification on eligibility and which category is appropriate for your proposed project. Call the Commission at (615) 741-1701.
www.arts.state.tn.us/grant_categories.htm

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE - RURAL DEVELOPMENT

www.rurdev.usda.gov/Community_Development.html

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT (HUD)

-Community Development Block Grants

www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/communitydevelopment/programs/

-Office of Sustainable Housing and Communities

portal.hud.gov/portal/page/portal/HUD/program_offices/sustainable_housing_communities

FUNDING RESEARCH

www.foundationcenter.org - extensive information on grantmaking and identifying funders

www.grants.gov - search the terms "cultural affairs," "arts," "humanities," "community development," "information and statistics"





CULTURAL ASSESSMENT & PLANNING CONSULTANTS

AMS Planning & Research Corp.

2150 Post Road, Floor 4
Fairfield, CT 06824-5669
Phone: (203) 256-1616
www.ams-online.com

Arts Extension Service

University of Massachusetts Amherst

100 Venture Way, Suite 201
Hadley, MA 01035-9430
Phone: (413) 545-2360
www.umass.edu/aes

Creative Community Builders

2929 Chicago Ave., Suite 911
Minneapolis, MN 55407
Phone: (612) 871-1180
www.communityandculture.com

Cultural Resources, Inc.

P.O. Box 1175
Rockport, ME 04856
Phone: (207) 236-6741
www.cultural-resources.org

Decision Support Partners, Inc.

PO Box 6573
Bozeman, MT 59771-6573
Phone: (406) 285-4479
www.suralephillips.com

Dreeszen & Associates

33 Bardwell Street
Florence, MA 01062 -1305
Phone: (413) 585-8474
www.dreeszen.info

The Field Organization

44 Concord Ave., Suite 305
Cambridge, MA 02138
Phone: (617) 945-5773
Toll Free: (800) 520-5560
www.fieldorg.com

Maryo Gard Ewell

Community/Arts Development
315 W. Ohio Ave.
Gunnison, CO 81230
Phone: (970) 641-3570
Email: maryo@gard-sibley.org

Mary Margaret Schoenfeld

804 North Fillmore Street
Arlington, VA 22201
Phone: (703) 472-3255
Email: mmschoenfeld@gmail.com

Linda Caldwell

Tennessee Overhill Heritage Assoc.
PO Box 143
Etowah, TN 37331
Phone: (423) 263-7232
Email: lcaldwell@tennesseeoverhill.com

Brent Cantrell

Jubilee Community Arts
1538 Laurel Ave.
Knoxville, TN 37916
Phone: (865) 522-5851
Email: cantrellb@jubileearts.org

Shawn Pitts

P.O. Box 54
Selmer, TN 38375
Phone: (731) 645-3850
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Liza Blair

3613 Lerch Street
Chattanooga, TN 37411
Phone: (423) 697-1739
Phone: (423) 400-7067
Email: blair37405@yahoo.com

For additional information, contact:

Tennessee Arts Commission
Leigh Green Patton
Director of Community Arts Development
Phone: (615) 532-9796
Email: leigh.patton@tn.gov

A series of 15 horizontal arrows pointing right, arranged in a single column. Each arrow is a simple outline with a triangular head and a rectangular tail. They are stacked vertically with a small gap between each one.



NOTES

A series of horizontal lines for writing notes. Each line is preceded by a small, stylized arrow pointing to the right, indicating the direction of writing. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page.





TENNESSEE ARTS COMMISSION

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the arts 
changing lives!
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